ASPECTS OF BRITAIN

Survey of Current Affairs

January 1992 Vol 22 No 1

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The *Survey of Current Affairs* is produced primarily for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office for use overseas, but in response to requests has also been made available in Britain. Subscription and distribution enquiries should be addressed to HMSO Books, P.O. Box 276, London SW8 5DT.

NOTE

The term 'Britain' is used informally in the *Survey of Current Affairs* to mean the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. 'Great Britain' comprises England, Wales and Scotland.

Government and Administration

Shorter Notes

CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The Home Secretary, Mr Kenneth Baker, announced the membership of the new Criminal Justice Consultative Council on 23 December 1991. The recommendation to establish the Council, with the aim of enhancing co-ordination within the criminal justice system, was accepted by the Government in the White Paper *Custody, Care and Justice: The Way Ahead for the Prison Service in England and Wales*, published in September 1991 (see p 382, 1991).

The Council's terms of reference are to promote better understanding, co-operation and co-ordination in the administration of the criminal justice system, in particular by:

– considering reports about developments in and affecting criminal justice;

– considering other information about the operation of the system; and

– overseeing the arrangements for special conferences.

The Council will not consider individual criminal cases.

Source: Home Office news release, 23.12.91.

MAGISTRATES' COURTS SERVICE

Proposals for the reorganisation of the magistrates' courts service were announced by the Home Secretary, Mr Kenneth Baker, on 19 December 1991.

Based on consultations following the scrutiny report on magistrates' courts published in July 1989 (see p 301, 1989), and a subsequent study of costs undertaken by independent consultants, the main proposals are that:

– magistrates' courts should remain a local service, managed by courts' committees, within a new framework of accountability; and

– responsibility for the finance, organisation and management of the magistrates' courts service will be transferred to the Lord Chancellor from the Home Secretary from 1 April 1992.

Responsibility for the criminal and procedural law of the magistrates' courts will remain with the Home Secretary. In these circumstances, the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, has decided to appoint a junior minister in the House of Commons in the Lord Chancellor's Department.

Other proposals include:

– the development of an inspectorate, to provide an effective audit of court administration and to promote the spread of best practice;

– the introduction of a systematic performance review and planning throughout the service; and

– a more coherent geographic structure, taking account as necessary of the review of the structure of local government at present underway (see pp 173-5, 1991).

'The aim of these reforms', said Mr Baker, 'will be to secure the improvements identified by the scrutiny. I do not believe it is

necessary for that purpose to bring forward legislative proposls to create a unified, and centralised, national service.' He continued 'I intend to set out these proposals in more detail in a White Paper and to continue to consult interested bodies as necessary.'

Sources: Home Office news release, 19.12.91; Lord Chancellor's Department news release, 19.12.91.

External Affairs and Defence

European Community

Britain and its Community partners reached agreement on a Treaty on European Union at the European Council meeting on 9 and 10 December 1991 at Maastricht in the Netherlands. The results of the Government's negotiation were endorsed by the House of Commons at the end of a parliamentary debate on 18 and 19 December.

European Community (EC) leaders adopted the content of a Treaty on Political Union and a Treaty on Economic and Monetary Union, together comprising the Treaty on European Union. The definitive version is expected to be finalised in February, when it should be signed by the 12 member states. It will then be subject to ratification by the national Parliaments, a process which should be completed by the end of 1992.

The decisions taken at Maastricht concluded the work of the intergovernmental conferences which had been convened in December 1990 (see p 240, 1990, and p 14, 1991). For details of the main Treaty provisions see pp 8-12 below.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

The Prime Minister, Mr John Major, set out the Government's view on the agreements reached at the European Council in a parliamentary statement on 11 December 1991 (*Hansard*, Vol 200, No 30, cols 859-78).

Economic and Monetary Union

Mr Major said that the Treaty provided for the possibility that Community member states would wish to adopt a single currency later in the 1990s but only if they met strict conditions on economic convergence, covering inflation rates, budget deficits, exchange rate stability and long-term interest rates. The British Government had pressed for these conditions from the outset.

He explained that a single currency could come into being in 1997, but only if a minimum of seven countries met the convergence conditions and if eight out of the 12 member states voted in favour. The Treaty laid down that a single currency would come into being by 1999, but only if the convergence conditions were met and only for those countries which met them. Mr Major added that it was therefore uncertain when a single currency would be created and which countries it would cover.

Britain's right to decide for itself whether or not to move to stage three of economic and monetary union was set out in a legally binding protocol which formed an integral part of the Treaty (see p 12). Explaining the effect of the protocol, which had been drafted by Britain, Mr Major said: 'We have exactly the same option to join a single currency at the same time as other member states if we wish. We shall be involved in all the decisions. But, unlike other governments, we have not bound ourselves to join regardless of whether it makes economic and political sense.'

Political Union

The Prime Minister said that the Treaty text on political union provided for enhanced intergovernmental co-operation on foreign and security policy, defence and the fight against international crime.

Reflecting Britain's view, the text provided for joint Community action in foreign policy if member states agreed. Where there was no

joint action, each member state would be entirely free to act on its own. If, after joint action had been agreed, a member state needed to take its own measures to meet changed circumstances, it could do so.

Commenting on the pressure from other member states to take foreign policy decisions by majority voting, Mr Major stressed that Britain did not agree that it could be outvoted on any substantive issue of foreign policy. He said that the Treaty provided that the Council of Ministers could, but only by unanimity, designate certain decisions to be taken by qualified majority voting. 'But we cannot be forced to subject our foreign policy to the will of other member states. We have, in fact, preserved unanimity for all decisions where we decide that we need it.'

Defence

Mr Major said that member states were agreed that Europe had to do more for its own defence and that the Western European Union (WEU) should be built up as the defence pillar of the European union. The Treaty embodied the view set out in the British-Italian declaration in October (see p 401, 1991), and endorsed at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit in November (see pp 441-5, 1991), that defence arrangements at European level must be compatible with NATO. The WEU would not be subordinate to the European Council.

Mr Major continued: 'We have avoided the danger of setting up defence structures which would compete with NATO. We have created a framework in which Europe can develop its defence role in a way which complements the American presence in Europe and does not put it at risk.'

Institutions and Accountability

The Prime Minister said that, at Britain's instigation, the Community had agreed to:

– increase the accountability of Community institutions;

– strengthen the European Parliament's financial control over the Commission;

– allow the European Parliament to investigate maladministration and to appoint a Community ombudsman accessible to all Community citizens;

– build up the role of the Court of Auditors, which would henceforth be an institution of the Community; and

– ensure compliance by member states with Community obligations by giving the European Court of Justice power to impose fines on governments which signed directives and subsequently did not enforce them.

Believing that the Council of Ministers must be the body that ultimately determined the Community's laws and policies, Mr Major refused to accept the proposal made by other member states for a power of co-decision between the European Parliament and the Council. However, Britain had been prepared to consider some blocking power for the European Parliament. The Treaty set up, in a limited number of areas, a conciliation procedure for disagreement between the Council and the Parliament. Mr Major added: 'In the last analysis, the Parliament would be able to block a decision in those areas, but only if an absolute majority of its members turned out to vote the proposal down.'

Community Competence

The Prime Minister acknowledged parliamentary concern in Britain over 'the creeping extension of Community competence over the last few years'. He said that the European Commission had often brought forward proposals using a 'dubious legal base' and that the Council of Ministers had found it difficult to halt that practice in the European Court. Significant steps, he explained, had been taken in response:

1 Issues of foreign and security policy, interior and justice matters and defence policy would be determined through co-operation on an intergovernmental basis outside the Treaty of Rome, thereby putting them beyond the reach of the Commission and the European Court.

2 The Treaty made it clear that the Community should be involved only in decisions which could not more effectively be taken at national level.

3 Community competence in some areas – notably health protection, education exchanges, vocational training and culture –

was clearly defined for the first time (see p 11).

4 There would be no extension of Community competence in the field of social policy, including employer/employee relations.

Mr Major recognised that the Community had a social dimension, adding that 'unlike some of our European partners, we have implemented that dimension too'. However, he believed that there was no reason for the Community to get involved in employment legislation, which must be for each country to decide for itself.

He said that over the last 12 years the Government had transformed labour relations, reducing the number of working days lost in strikes from 29 million in 1979 to less than 2 million in 1990. 'I was not prepared to see that record put in jeopardy. Nor was I prepared to risk Britain's competitive position as the European magnet for inward investment. I was not prepared to put British jobs on the line.' He continued: 'Our arguments are based not only on our national self-interest but on the risks we perceive to the competitive position of the Community as a whole.'

Enlargement

Mr Major said that it was the primary task of the Community to extend its own advantages of democracy, stability and prosperity to Eastern Europe. On Britain's initiative, member states committed themselves at Maastricht to the further enlargement of the Community, starting with the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). 'When they and, in due course, the new democracies of Eastern Europe, are ready to join the Community, we shall be ready to welcome them.' The European Commission would report on the issue of enlargement to the European Council to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, in June 1992.

Foreign Policy Issues

Commenting on events in the Soviet Union (see p 12), Mr Major said that the European Council called on the republics to respect the rights of minorities, to implement international agreements on arms control and nuclear non-proliferation, to control and secure their nuclear weapons and to honour their obligations in respect of the Soviet Union's external debt.

The European Council also endorsed the demands made by Britain, the United States and France to the Libyan Government requiring it to abandon its support for terrorism and to hand over the perpetrators of the bombing of a United States airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988 (see pp 449-50, 1991).

Conclusion

Cautioning against the setting of goals for the Community which could not be achieved, Mr Major said: 'Our role has been to put forward practical suggestions – and sometimes to rein in the larger ambitions of our partners. Where we believed their ideas would not work, we have put forward our own alternatives. Those can be found throughout this Treaty.' He concluded: 'As with all international negotiations, there has been give and take between all 12 member states. But the process was one in which Britain has played a leading role, and the result is one in which we can clearly see the imprint of our views.'

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

Prime Minister's Address

Opening the two-day debate in the House of Commons on 18 December 1991 (*Hansard*, Vol 201, No 35, cols 275-406, and No 36, cols 407-25 and 477-555), Mr Major moved: 'That this House congratulates the Prime Minister on achieving all the negotiating objectives set out in the motion that was supported by the House on 21 November [see pp 445-9, 1991]; and warmly endorses the agreement secured by the Government at Maastricht.'

Mr Major envisaged that the Treaty on European Union would be ready for signature at the beginning of February 1992, and could enter into force on 1 January 1993 upon completion of the process of ratification by all 12 member states. For Britain to ratify the Treaty, it would need to be incorporated into British law by amending the European Communities Act 1972. This would properly be a matter for the next British Parliament. The Prime Minister confirmed that the word 'federal' had been removed from the text of the Treaty and that

Britain's partners had agreed to return to the words of the original Treaty of Rome – 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'. That, he believed, had a different connotation. 'It means that the interests of the Community's citizens must come first and foremost.'

Mr Major said that the Community had made a unique contribution to the development of post-war Europe. Believing that Britain's future lay as a European power, albeit with continuing responsibilities in many parts of the world, Mr Major said that 'the balance of national interests lies clearly in making a success of our membership of the Community'.

The Community could fulfil its role properly only if it responded to the needs of its European citizens. Mr Major said that it must respect national identity and national traditions, and 'must not, in the name of some wider European ambition, override the democratic wishes of the people of any one of its member states'.

Political Union

The Prime Minister considered that the most significant aspect of the Treaty was the agreement to co-operate in a legally binding but intergovernmental framework in the three key areas of law and order, foreign policy and defence policy. Britain could not accept the conduct of such co-operation through the institutions of the Community.

He continued: 'We have been able to draw a crucial distinction between those areas, such as the single market, where the Community institutions are the best tools for the job, and other areas, such as foreign policy and the fight against crime, where direct co-operation between national capitals is likely to produce the best result.'

Social Issues

Setting out the reasons why Britain could not agree to the social chapter in the draft Treaty, the Prime Minister said that 'the issue before us is whether social policy should be dictated by Brussels or determined in this country'. Britain, he said, had long accepted that there should be a social dimension to the activities of the Community. It made sense to ensure common standards of health and safety at work. Also, there were already agreed Community measures covering freedom of movement, collective redundancy arrangements and equal treatment for men and women in pay and social security. These all helped people to seek a job anywhere in the Community, thereby widening opportunities for citizens.

Mr Major added that Britain had not only agreed these measures but had implemented them. 'With Germany, we are the only member state that has implemented all the 18 directives so far adopted by the Community. We have made it clear that we will adopt and implement the majority of the proposals in the Community's existing social action programme.' Nineteen of the 33 measures so far published had been agreed by the Council of Ministers, and Britain had not blocked a single one of them.

However, Britain could not accept Community intrusion into aspects of social policy that were best decided nationally. Resisting proposed Community directives on working time and part-time working, Mr Major emphasised that the Government could not support proposals that would destroy jobs by imposing damaging costs on British industry. 'Those are directives that the European Commission is endeavouring to make, even under its existing competence. That makes it abundantly clear why I was not prepared to accept a further massive extension of competence in this field.'

The Prime Minister explained that he rejected the social chapter since it would have implied the imposition of laws on Britain, by a qualified majority vote of member states, on working conditions, rights of information and consultation and any action related to the provision of jobs for unemployed people. 'These would have ceased to be a matter for decision by this House and by British employers and employees, according to the needs of this country.' A centralised Community social policy could not take account of wide variations in traditional practice, culture and experience.

Economic and Monetary Union

Commenting on economic and monetary union, Mr Major said that a provision for Britain to decide whether, and when, to join a

single currency had been achieved precisely, and in legally binding form. 'If we wish to join a single currency, it will be open to Parliament to decide to do so at exactly the same time as any of our partners.'

He continued: 'Britain is among those who will meet the strict convergence conditions. We took the lead in setting them and will continue to be involved at every stage leading up to the decision whether to launch a single currency. . . . I believe that it has been right for this country to maintain . . . a two-way option – to go in if we judge it right to do so, but to stay out if we judge it right to do so.'

Enlargement

The Prime Minister considered that the Community's commitment to further enlargement, at Britain's initiative, would be seen as one of the most significant agreements reached at Maastricht. He hoped that, during Britain's presidency of the Community in the second half of 1992, negotiations leading to membership of the Community for Austria, Sweden and other EFTA countries would begin. He added that Britain would start to pave the way for the eventual membership of the countries of Eastern Europe.

Opposition Views

Official Opposition

The Leader of the official Opposition, Mr Neil Kinnock, agreed that as a result of the decisions reached at the Maastricht Council the European Community would continue to develop economically, politically, socially and culturally. He hoped that the Community would not only enlarge itself but use its relative prosperity and its democracy to assist the development of the economies and new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe.

Mr Kinnock expressed concern, however, that the Government's reservations on economic and monetary union and the social chapter would encourage the development of a 'two-speed Community'. He believed that it would be wrong for Britain to opt out of monetary union if the convergence conditions were achieved. If it did so, there would be, he said, a loss of inward and domestic investment and the City of London would not maintain its pre-eminence as a financial centre.

Mr Kinnock considered that the funding of the Common Agricultural Policy in its present form should be the major source of reoriented finance for the achievement of economic convergence in the Community.

On the social chapter, Mr Kinnock said that every other government in the Community accepted the idea that, as trade barriers came down and monetary co-operation increased, there should be a development of basic social rights and common employment standards throughout the Community. Improved conditions for health and safety added to efficiency, while good information and consultation procedures were essential to team efforts and economic success.

Liberal Democrats

The leader of the Liberal Democrats, Mr Paddy Ashdown, said that the Maastricht treaty marked a 'decisive and irreversible step towards integration and unity' for the European Community. However, he believed that ambivalence continued to influence Britain's policy towards Europe.

The Government's attitude towards the adoption of a single currency, said Mr Ashdown, would discourage inward investment for Britain and mean the end of any realistic possibility of siting the new European Bank in London.

Although the Liberal Democrats were critical of some provisions in the social chapter of the treaty, he considered that Britain could not influence events by opting out of the social dimension of the Community.

Mr Ashdown also criticised the Maastricht treaty for not strengthening the powers of the European Parliament, which was far too weak. The Government had missed the opportunity to make the Community more democratic and accountable. All laws passed by the Council of Ministers should also be passed by the Parliament.

Government Reply

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd, reaffirmed that the Treaty provided for co-operation in foreign policy between the governments of member states and for binding joint action where all governments agreed.

Citing the compromise reached by the Community on 16 December 1991 on the conditional recognition of the republics of Yugoslavia (see p 13), Mr Hurd said: 'Under the new system, we thrash out our differences around a table and agree, where we can reach agreement, to act jointly – and to hold to that action. I readily concede that it is not at all easy to operate, but it becomes easier as we learn from experience and accept the discipline of working together.'

He confirmed that the Treaty arrangements concerning a common foreign and security policy were compatible with the duties of Britain and France as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Again citing discussions about Yugoslavia as an example, he explained: 'The line that we take . . . [in the Security Council] reflects the discussions and conclusions reached by the Twelve around the table. However, the statutory position of the British and French regarding the United Nations Charter has been fully safeguarded.'

THE MAASTRICHT AGREEMENTS

The Treaty created the European Union covering the Community's existing and increased responsibilities and had specific new features which are set out below:

Subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity (see p 167, 1990), setting the limits of Community action, was embodied in the Treaty. For policy areas outside its exclusive jurisdiction, the Community would act 'only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states and can therefore . . . be better achieved by the Community. Any action by the Community shall not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaty.'

Citizenship of the Union

The Treaty introduced the concept of Union citizenship, whereby:

– every person holding the nationality of a member state would be a citizen of the Union;

– every citizen would be able to move and reside freely within the territory of member states subject to existing conditions (the necessary measures to facilitate the exercise of this right would be taken by unanimous decision of the Council of Ministers);

– every citizen of the Union residing in a member state of which he or she is not a national would have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in municipal elections in that state, subject to arrangements to be agreed by the Council before the end of 1994;

– every citizen residing in a member state of which he or she is not a national would have a similar right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament in that state, subject to rules to be agreed by the Council by the end of 1993;

– a Union citizen in a non-EC country would be entitled to diplomatic or consular protection by any member state, if the member state of which he or she is a national was unrepresented there. Before the end of 1993, member states would establish the necessary rules among themselves and start the international negotiations required to secure this protection; and

– every citizen would have the right to petition the European Parliament or apply to the Ombudsman (see p 9).

Powers of the European Parliament

The Treaty enhanced the powers and responsibilities of the European Parliament. The Parliament would, in certain areas, be able to reject by an absolute majority of its members a proposal adopted by the Council of Ministers if agreement could not be reached between the two institutions in a joint Conciliation Committee.

This procedure, which would apply mainly to Community policies where qualified majority voting was provided for the Council, would cover the following areas:

– internal market legislation, including the right of establishment and the free circulation of workers; and

– common policies for research and development, trans-European networks, training, education, culture, health, consumer affairs and the environment programme (see p 11).

The European Commission and its President would be subject to Parliament's approval at the start of their mandate, which

would be for five years rather than four from the beginning of 1995, coinciding with the Parliament's new term. The Parliament would be able to request the Commission to submit a proposal where it decided by overall majority vote that new EC legislation was needed.

The Treaty says that, at the request of a quarter of its members, the Parliament could set up a temporary Committee of Enquiry to investigate alleged contraventions or maladministration in the implementation of Community law. An Ombudsman would be appointed by the Parliament to follow up complaints by citizens against Community maladministration.

In addition, the Parliament would draw up proposals for a uniform election procedure which would have to be agreed unanimously by the Council. Member states would agree on the size of the Parliament in the light of Community enlargement.

Budgetary Control

In order to strengthen control of the Community's finances, the Treaty provides that:

– when proposing new measures, the Commission would have to give assurances that these could be financed within the limits of EC financial resources;

– the Court of Auditors would become a full EC institution; and

– the European Parliament would be able to ask the Commission to give evidence regarding spending and financial control and the Commission would act on the decisions and observations of the Parliament.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

The Treaty provides for the establishment of a common foreign and security policy which 'shall include all questions related to the security of the European Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence'.

The policy would be implemented through intergovernmental procedures in the Council of Ministers, although the Commission would be associated with the work carried out and the European Parliament would be kept regularly informed.

The procedure for adopting joint action in matters covered by the foreign and security policy would be as follows:

– the Council of Ministers would decide, on the basis of general guidelines from the European Council, that a matter should be the subject of joint action, setting out the scope and objectives of such action and the means and procedures for its implementation;

– the Council would, when pursuing joint action, define those matters on which decisions were to be taken by a qualified majority vote;

– 'joint actions shall commit the member states in the positions they adopt and in the conduct of their activity';

– whenever there was any plan to adopt a national position or take national action pursuant to a joint action, the Council would be informed accordingly to allow for prior consultations; and

– 'in cases of imperative need arising from changes in the situation and failing a Council decision, member states may take the necessary measures . . . having regard to the general objectives of the joint action.'

Concerning representation at the United Nations, the Treaty provides that:

– EC member states which were also members of the UN Security Council would 'concert and keep other member states fully informed'; and

– EC member states which were permanent members of the Security Council would, 'in the execution of their functions, ensure the defence of the positions and the interests of the Union, without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter'.

Defence

Regarding defence policy and the role of the WEU, the main elements of the agreement reached at Maastricht were that:

– the policy of the Union should not prejudice national defence policies and should respect NATO obligations;

– the WEU would be developed as the defence component of the European Union and as the means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance and to formulate a common European defence policy;

– the WEU would 'elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications' and its operational role would be strengthened;

– those Community countries not currently in the WEU would be invited to join, while other European states could become associate members;

– the WEU headquarters would be transferred from London to Brussels; and

– the new Treaty defence provisions would be revised by 1998 on the basis of a report to be presented to the European Council in 1996.

Justice, Home Affairs and Immigration

Justice and home affairs would remain an intergovernmental pillar of the Union Treaty, although the European Commission would be associated with decision-making and would have limited powers of initiative.

The provisions identify the following areas of common interest: asylum policy, crossing of the Community's external borders, immigration policy, combatting drug addiction and fraud, judicial co-operation in civil and criminal matters, and customs and police co-operation. In these areas, joint positions and joint action would be taken by the Council of Ministers, which could decide on the adoption of certain measures by qualified majority voting.

Only member states would have powers of initiative in criminal matters, although the European Commission would be associated with the work, and the views of the European Parliament would be taken into consideration.

The Treaty provisions make special reference to compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights and the Convention on the Status of Refugees and to 'having regard to the protection afforded by member states to persons persecuted on political grounds'.

Immigration

In establishing a common visa policy, the Council of Ministers would decide by unanimity, in the first instance, on a list of countries whose citizens would require a visa for entry to an EC member state. From 1 January 1996 decisions could be taken by qualified majority voting.

The Treaty includes a safeguard provision to deal with unforeseen emergencies, such as the threat of a sudden inflow of potential migrants or refugees.

Provision is made for a common visa policy to deal with short-term stays. Long-term immigration, asylum and police co-operation would be dealt with under intergovernmental arrangements.

Social Agreement

As a result of British opposition to the draft Treaty provisions on social policy, there will be no change to the existing social articles in the Treaty of Rome as modified by the Single European Act.

However, the 11 member states besides Britain agreed to a separate agreement on social policy to be annexed to the Treaty with a view to implementing the 1989 Social Charter (which Britain did not sign – see pp 458-9, 1989). It contains a commitment to the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour and the development of human resources, 'taking account of the diverse forms of national practices'.

Under a protocol establishing the agreement, the 11 member states are authorised 'to have recourse to the Institutions, procedures and mechanisms of the European Community' for the purposes of formulating and implementing policy.

Decision-making under the agreement would be on the basis of a modified system of qualified majority voting on the following issues: health and safety, working conditions, information and consultation of the workforce, equality at work between men and women and the integration of persons excluded from the labour market. Issues for unanimous voting would include social security and social protection of workers, protection of workers made redundant, representation and collective defence of the interests of workers and employers, conditions of employment for third-country nationals and financial contributions for promoting jobs. Wage rates, the right of association, the right to strike or the right to impose lock-outs would not be covered by these provisions.

The separate agreement reinforces existing Community rules on equal pay for men and women.

Other Initiatives

Some areas of Community competence are expanded in the Union Treaty and new ones are introduced, as follows:

Cohesion

Measures to reduce the gaps between the prosperity of different regions in the Community include a Cohesion Fund, to be set up by the end of 1993 to finance projects in areas of environmental protection and transport infrastructure. The Council of Ministers would decide unanimously where action was needed beyond the scope of the existing structural funds.

Committee of the Regions

This committee, with a four-year term of office, would consist of representatives of regional and local government authorities. It would be consulted by the Council or the European Commission on matters of major impact on the regions. It could also submit its own opinion on an issue involving specific regional interests.

Trans-European Networks

Under this initiative, the Community would contribute to the establishment and development of trans-European networks in transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures. Support could be given to national programmes as well as through the Cohesion Fund.

Consumer Protection

The Treaty embodies a Community commitment to 'the attainment of a high level of consumer protection' through internal market measures or specific action.

Education and Vocational Training

Under the Treaty, the responsibility of member states for the content of teaching courses and the organisation of education systems would be respected. There would be no EC harmonisation of the laws and regulations of member states.

Community action would be aimed at:

– developing 'the European dimension' in education, particularly in the field of language learning;

– encouraging the mobility of students and teachers; and

– promoting co-operation between educational establishments and developing exchanges.

Environment

The Treaty restates EC environmental objectives, including the promotion of measures at an international level. It provides for the extension of Community competence, by unanimous decision of the Council, to measures relating to town and country planning, to land use with the exception of waste management and to choice of energy supplies.

Public Health

Under the Treaty, the Council would be able to adopt recommendations in the field of public health by qualified majority voting, with the aim of 'ensuring a high level of human health protection'. Member states would co-ordinate their policies and programmes for disease prevention in liaison with the Commission.

Compliance with EC Law

The European Court would be able to fine a member state for failing to comply with a judgment of the Court.

Economic and Monetary Union

The Maastricht Treaty provides for the introduction by 1 January 1999 of the final stage of economic and monetary union (EMU) with a single currency. Member states would not be allowed to join EMU unless they satisfied four convergence criteria. These are:

– a rate of inflation no more than 1·5 per cent above the average of the three best performing member states;

– that government deficits should not be above 3 per cent of gross domestic product and public debt should not exceed 60 per cent of gross domestic product;

– that currency should stay within normal fluctuation margins in the present exchange rate mechanism for at least two years; and

– that interest rates should not be more than 2 per cent above the three best performing states over the previous 12 months.

Bringing economies into line would begin on 1 January 1994. By the end of 1996 the European Council would decide whether a majority of member states (seven out of 12 or one less if Britain did not intend to join the final stage) met these criteria. If the Council found that enough states did so, it could then decide by qualified majority to launch the final stage of EMU. If no date had been fixed by the end of 1997, the single currency in the form of the present economic currency unit would be introduced on 1 January 1999. A European Central Bank would have exclusive rights to authorise issue of bank notes in the Community and member states, while national banks would be able to issue coins subject to the Bank's approval. The Central Bank and national central banks would be independent from Community institutions, governments or any other body.

The European Central Bank and the national central banks would:

– define and implement Community monetary policy;

– conduct foreign exchange operations;

– hold and manage official foreign reserves of member states; and

– promote the smooth operation of payment systems.

A special protocol to the Treaty recognises that Britain would not be obliged or committed to move to the final stage without a separate decision to do so by the British Government and Parliament. Britain would notify the Council by the end of 1996 whether it intended to move to final monetary union or by 1 January 1998 if no decision had yet been taken by the Council.

If Britain did not join the final stage, it would retain all its powers on monetary and exchange rate policy and would not be subject to Community disciplines. It was, however, free to join EMU if it satisfied the convergence conditions.

End of the Soviet Union

At the end of 1991 the Soviet Union ceased to exist and was replaced by the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

British Reaction

In a letter written to the Russian President, Mr Boris Yeltsin, on 23 December 1991, the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, said that Britain welcomed the establishment of the Commonwealth and would do all in its power 'to help the development of stable, peaceful and prosperous relations between the states of the former Soviet Union'. Mr Major added: 'I confirm that, in my Government's view, there is continuity of statehood between Russia and the former USSR [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] and that its international rights and obligations, including those under the UN [United Nations] Charter, will now be those of Russia.' Britain also welcomed Russia's assumption of responsibility for the former Soviet Union's financial obligations to the United Nations and looked forward to continuing close collaboration with Russia's representative as a fellow permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Concluding, Mr Major renewed his invitation to President Yeltsin to pay an early official visit to Britain.

Background

On 8 December representatives of the three former Soviet republics of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine met in Minsk and agreed to set up a Commonwealth of Independent States to replace the Soviet Union. All the other republics (except Georgia) subsequently agreed to take part in the Commonwealth.

During talks in Moscow on 17 December, President Yeltsin and the Soviet President, Mr Mikail Gorbachev, agreed that the transition to the Commonwealth of Independent States would take place at the end of December 1991.

Representatives of the eleven republics met in Alma Ata on 21 December, where agreement was reached on the Commonwealth's co-ordinating institutions, including the creation of the council of heads of states as the supreme body. They also agreed that Russia would represent the Commonwealth

and replace the Soviet Union as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

On 25 December, President Gorbachev announced his resignation as Soviet President, and control of Soviet nuclear weapons was transferred to President Yeltsin.

European Community Reaction

On 23 December, Britain and the other 11 European Community (EC) states welcomed the Russian Government's acceptance of the former Soviet Union's international commitments and responsibilities. They also said that they would recognise the other republics in the Commonwealth once they had received certain assurances as outlined in a statement on 16 December. New states in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had to:

– respect the provisions of the UN Charter and the commitments in the Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Charter of Paris on the rule of law, democracy and human rights;

– guarantee the rights of minorities and ethnic and national groups;

– respect the inviolability of all frontiers, which could be changed only by peaceful means and common agreement;

– accept all commitments on disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation and on regional stability and security; and

– commit themselves to settle by agreement all questions concerning state succession and regional disputes.

The 23 December statement also expected single control to be assumed over nuclear weapons and their non-proliferation.

A further EC statement was issued in Brussels on 31 December, welcoming commitments received from eight republics that they were prepared to fulfil these assurances. Community member states therefore said that they were ready to proceed with the recognition of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Recognition of these eight republics took place on 15 January. Two days later Britain announced that it had recognised Kirgizstan and Tajikistan following their acceptance of the EC guidelines.

Assistance to the Republics

Britain is involved with a number of schemes giving aid to the republics.

In 1989, Britain established a £50-million know-how fund, of which nearly £10 million has been committed to over 50 projects in the republics and the three Baltic states (see p 186, 1991). Another British initiative was started during December 1991, providing £20-million worth of feed grain to St Petersburg in order to prevent the premature slaughter of livestock.

Britain is also providing some £300 million as part of European Community assistance. This EC aid includes:

– food aid credits worth £1,225 million; and

– food grants worth £315 million.

Part of some £262·5 million of EC technical assistance being given to the republics is designed to help in the restructuring of the food distribution system and improvements in transport.

Yugoslavia

On 16 December 1991, Britain and the other European Community member states agreed to recognise Yugoslav republics meeting certain conditions.

Under this agreement, applications for recognition were submitted to the arbitration commission of the conference on Yugoslavia, chaired by Lord Carrington. The commission is advising on whether republics meet the conditions, which are the same as those regarding the former Soviet republics (see above). In the case of Yugoslavia, the European Community (EC) and its member states also require constitutional and political guarantees to ensure that a Yugoslav republic does not have territorial claims on a neighbouring state and that it will not conduct any hostile propaganda against any Community neighbour. In addition, Community member states require republics to support the efforts of the United Nations (UN) and the continuation of the EC peace conference on Yugoslavia. On 15 January, EC

foreign ministers agreed to recognise Slovenia and Croatia.

British Views

Speaking in the House of Commons on 18 December 1991 (*Hansard*, Vol 201, No 35, cols 260-2 and 265-6), the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd, said that recognition of the Yugoslav republics, especially Slovenia and Croatia, was not a matter of principle but of 'timing and judgement', since they were unwilling to go back into any entity called Yugoslavia. He noted that there was a tradition of the main states of Western Europe splitting in rivalry on Balkan questions by backing a particular group or line and it ending up on the battlefield. 'I do not believe that the history of that tradition is a good one. It is better to thrash out such differences round a table . . .'

Mr Hurd pointed out that recognition of the republics would not stop the killing. The main hopes for this were the European Community peace conference (see p 338, 1991) and the prospect of United Nations peacekeeping. He hoped that the UN representative, Mr Cyrus Vance, would be able to suggest to the UN Security Council that such a force should be sent.

However, he did not think that anybody believed that a UN or European peacekeeping force could 'force its way into Yugoslavia against the opposition either of the Yugoslav national army . . . or of any armed force. The proposition has always been that a peacekeeping force should enforce and keep a ceasefire which already existed. That remains the position . . . quite independently of any questions of recognition.'

Action by the United Nations

The United Nations Security Council became concerned about the fighting in Yugoslavia on 25 September 1991, when it expressed support for EC efforts to bring about a peace settlement (see p 363, 1991) and invited the UN Secretary-General to offer his assistance; it also appealed to all the parties to settle their disputes peacefully. In addition, the Security Council called on all UN member states to implement an immediate embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia. Later in the year the then Secretary-General, Sr. Perez de Cuellar, appointed Mr Vance as his personal envoy to promote peace in Yugoslavia.

On 26 November the Government of Yugoslavia requested the United Nations to establish a peacekeeping operation. On the next day the Security Council approved the efforts of the Secretary-General and his personal envoy and expressed the hope that early recommendations could be presented to it on the possible establishment of a UN peacekeeping operation. On 15 December the Security Council, while expressing the view that the conditions for a peacekeeping operation did not yet exist, endorsed the Secretary-General's offer to send to Yugoslavia a small group of personnel, including military personnel, to carry forward preparations for possible peacekeeping.

On 23 November the parties, meeting in Geneva, agreed to an unconditional ceasefire. This, however, was not implemented immediately. A further agreement was reached in Sarajevo on 2 January on arrangements for implementing the ceasefire. The Security Council subsequently endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal to send a group of up to 50 military liaison officers to promote maintenance of the ceasefire. The officers arrived on 14 and 15 January.

Shorter Note

NORTH ATLANTIC CO-OPERATION COUNCIL

The first meeting of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) took place in Brussels on 20 December 1991.

The Council is made up of member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), members of the former Warsaw Pact and the Baltic states. It was set up following proposals put forward by the November 1991 NATO Summit (see p 441, 1991).

At the end of the meeting a statement on dialogue, partnership and co-operation was issued, saying that the participants wished to further the great progress that had been made across Europe in establishing solid democratic institutions, respect for human

rights and economic liberty. It was agreed that NATO was an important source of stability, helping to achieve the shared goal of a Europe whole and free. They supported the concept of a network of institutions which could complement each other to safeguard the freedom, security and prosperity of all European and North American states.

The NACC decided to hold:

– annual meetings with the North Atlantic Council at a ministerial level;

– bi-monthly meetings of the North Atlantic Council with liaison partners at ambassadorial level;

– additional meetings of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council at ministerial or ambassadorial level as circumstances warranted; and

– regular meetings with NATO subordinate committees.

Consultation and co-operation would concentrate on security and related issues. Information about NATO would be disseminated in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe through diplomatic channels.

At the meeting the representative of the former Soviet Union, who asked for all references to the Union to be excluded from the statement, said that the agreements regarding contacts between members of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council would be valid for the sovereign states which were the legal successors of the Soviet Union (see p 12). He had earlier reaffirmed the commitment of the then Soviet authorities to maintaining unified control of nuclear weapons.

Source: NATO news release, 20.12.91.

Economic and Scientific Affairs

Industrial Disputes

In 1990, Britain was middle-ranking in the incidence of working days lost through industrial disputes in member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In the five years between 1986 and 1990 the number of days lost in Britain was nearly 70 per cent lower than in the previous five-year period.

International Comparisons

Details of the most recent international comparisons are contained in an article in the December 1991 *Employment Gazette* (HMSO, £4·15; ISBN 0 11 728938 8). The figures show that, of the 13 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries for which 1990 data are available, Britain was ranked seventh in the incidence of industrial disputes, as measured by the

Table 1
Industrial Disputes: Working Days Lost per 1,000 Employees in All Industries and Services

			Average[a]	
	1989	1990	1980 -84	1985 -89
Britain	180	80	480	180
Australia	180	200	470	230
Austria	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
Canada	180	290	660	280
Denmark	20	40	110	240
Finland	100	430	480	340
France	50	*na*	90	60
Federal Republic of Germany	*b*	10	50	*b*
Greece	*na*	*na*	740	(1,480)
Irish Republic	60	*na*	470	290
Italy	300	*na*	950	300
Japan	*b*	*na*	10	10
Netherlands	*b*	40	20	10
New Zealand	170	*na*	350	500
Norway	10	80	60	140
Portugal	*na*	*na*	200	(90)
Spain	420	250	650	650
Sweden	100	190	240	120
Switzerland	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
United States	150	50	160	90

[a] Brackets indicate averages based on incomplete data.
[b] Fewer than 5.
na = not available.

number of days lost per 1,000 employees. In 1989, Britain was approximately three-quarters of the way down the table.[1]

Table 1 gives details for 1989 and 1990 and averages for the periods 1980-84 and 1985-89. In most countries there was considerable variation from one year to another, with some years' figures being heavily influenced by a small number of major stoppages. It is therefore appropriate to make comparisons based on a longer period than a single year. In general, there was a lesser incidence of industrial disputes in the later period, with only Denmark, Greece, New Zealand and Norway losing more days in 1985-89 than they did in 1980-84.

[1] Data is not readily available for Belgium, Iceland, Luxembourg and Turkey. The average figures for the period 1980-89, therefore, do not cover these countries. Some other countries' averages are based on incomplete data.

During 1985-89, Britain lost an annual average of 180 days per 1,000 workers, a figure that was exceeded by Greece (1,480 days), Spain (650 days), New Zealand (500 days), Finland (340 days), Italy (300 days), the Irish Republic (290 days), Canada (280 days), Denmark (240 days) and Australia (230 days). The incidence rate in Britain in 1985-89 was over 60 per cent lower than in 1980-84, compared with 20 per cent for the OECD as a whole.

Industrial disputes are more prevalent in certain industries. Table 2 shows working days lost per 1,000 employees in mining, quarrying, manufacturing, construction, transport and communications. For many countries, these were over twice as high as the average for all industries and services. Britain's relatively high level was partly a result of the coal miners' strike of 1984-85 (see pp 47-8 and 77-8, 1985).

Table 2
Industrial Disputes: Working Days Lost per 1,000 Employees in Mining, Quarrying, Manufacturing, Construction, Transport and Communications

			Average[a]	
	1989	1990	1980 -84	1985 -89
Britain	200	170	1,070	360
Australia	370	490	1,020	520
Austria	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
Canada	200	760	1,290	640
Denmark	60	100	250	540
Finland	140	90	640	600
France	*na*	*na*	180	(80)
Federal Republic of Germany	10	10	100	*b*
Greece	*na*	*na*	(970)	*na*
Irish Republic	130	*na*	690	340
Italy	370	*na*	200	400
Japan	10	*na*	30	10
Netherlands	10	100	30	20
New Zealand	280	*na*	(760)	(1,150)
Norway	10	120	130	220
Portugal	*na*	*na*	360	(170)
Spain	800	340	(610)	710
Sweden	40	20	490	170
Switzerland	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*
United States	530	170	410	250

[a] Brackets indicate averages based on incomplete data.
[b] Fewer than 5.
na = not available.

Definitions used in the figures vary from country to country. For example, some countries include loss of days by workers indirectly affected, while others do not. Likewise, some countries use a minimum duration in their definition – for example, Britain records only those strikes of more than one day's duration, unless 100 or more working days are lost in total. In particular, the United States records only those strikes involving more than 1,000 workers. There is also a break in the series for Canadian statistics between the years 1984 and 1985.

BT Share Offer

The Government has welcomed the success of the sale of part of its remaining stake in British Telecommunications plc, which raised approximately £5,350 million. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Francis Maude, said that the sale marked another milestone in the Government's privatisation programme.

Background

British Telecommunications plc (BT) was first privatised in the autumn of 1984 (see pp 269-72, 1983, and pp 160 and 453-4, 1984). However, the Government did not dispose of its entire holding in the company, and retained just under half of the equity. The 1984 flotation was successful in attracting interest; over 2 million applications for shares were received from the general public, and the offer was considerably over-subscribed. It was at that time by far the most significant sale in the Government's privatisation programme, although several other large flotations of formerly nationalised industries have subsequently taken place.

Present Sale

The present offer fulfilled the Government's intention to reduce further its holding in BT. It was divided into a British public offer and an international tender offer. On 27 November 1991, S.G.Warburg Securities, the global co-ordinator, offered for sale part of the Government's remaining BT shares, on behalf of HM Treasury. The offer closed on 4 December 1991. Following the sale, the Government retained approximately 1,366 million BT shares, about 22 per cent of the total.

For the public offer, members of the public were encouraged to register with a BT Share Information Office, either directly or through designated 'share shops', stockbrokers and other financial intermediaries. Special dealing arrangements were made for people buying through share shops. Those who registered were sent registration forms. Members of the public were also able to apply for shares on public application forms printed in the newspapers, although people applying on these forms were not eligible to receive incentives and received a less preferential allocation of shares.

Allocation of Shares

British Public Offer

HM Treasury sold 1,050 million shares in the British public offer. These shares were priced at 335 pence each fully paid, with a first instalment of 110 pence per share presently payable. A second instalment of 120 pence per share and the final instalment of 105 pence will be payable by 7 July 1992 and 2 March 1993 respectively.

Some 2·8 million applications were received for the offer, totalling 1,760 million shares or approximately 1·7 million times the amount of shares sold in the offer. Approximately 88 per cent of applications were made through share shops, stockbrokers or other financial intermediaries. Provisional allocations of shares were announced on 8 December 1991 and confirmed the following day. Existing BT shareholders – over 400,000 of whom applied – and those who applied on share shop forms or registrant forms were given preference over those who applied on public application forms. There were also preferential arrangements for BT employees, over 50,000 of whom made applications.

As in many previous privatisation offers, the allocation scheme favoured those who applied for small quantities of shares. Those who applied for the minimum of 100 shares received an allocation in full; those who applied for larger amounts received allocations

scaled back by an increasingly high proportion. Thus, for example, qualifying BT shareholders who applied for 1,000 shares received 950 if they applied on a share shop form and 850 if they applied on a registrant form; non-shareholders applying for 1,000 shares received 500 if applied for on a share shop form and 360 on a registrant form; and those who applied for 1,000 shares on a public application received no shares.

International Tender Offer

A total of 525 million shares were sold in the international tender offer. The price for these shares was set at 350 pence per share fully paid, some 15 pence per share higher than the British public offer price. The first instalment was 125 pence per share, with the second two instalments being the same as those for the public offer. Bids were received for more than double the number of shares available.

Government View

Commenting on the sale, Mr Maude said that the innovative sale structure had mobilised over £11,000 million of demand in difficult market conditions. Some 2·4 million people had registered with a share shop, stockbroker or financial intermediary. The bidding process had changed traditional City issuing practices, demonstrating the flexibility and innovation of London's financial markets. All the Government's objectives had been met in full. The sale was 'a success for the taxpayer; a success for the City of London; and a success for share ownership'.

Scientific Research and Innovation

Government support for civil scientific research funded by research councils is to rise significantly during the next three years, giving an important boost to new research and to research grants to universities and polytechnics. Five leading businessmen have been appointed by the Government to help stimulate the commercial exploitation of Britain's science and technology base.

Science Budget

A statement was made by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mr Kenneth Clarke, in the House of Commons on 16 December 1991 (*Hansard*, Vol 201, No 33, written answers, cols 33-4) about the distribution of the Government's 1992-93 science budget between the five research councils and other institutions (see table). He also announced provisional budget allocations for 1993-94 and 1994-95.

Mr Clarke said that the allocation of £1,050 million for 1992-93 represented a 2·5 per cent rise in real terms and would act as a significant stimulus to the science base (see pp 343-6, 1991). Total provisional budgets for 1993-94 and 1994-95 would be £1,181 million and £1,270 million respectively. The science budget for 1992-93, excluding certain sums transferred between research councils and higher education establishments, is 25 per cent higher in real terms than in 1979-80 and by 1994-95 it will be more than 30 per cent higher.

The Secretary of State said that 'the rising profile' of the science budget over the next three years would enable the research councils to support a number of new research initiatives, including:

– the Medical Research Council's work on the treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders;

– the Agricultural and Food Research Council's work on the chemical language by which cells communicate with each other within plants and animals; and

– the Natural Environment Research Council's Land-Ocean Interactions Study, which will further the understanding of processes affecting organic matter, such as river sediment, sewage and gases transported between land, ocean and atmosphere and their effect on the properties and health of coastal facilities. The study will facilitate the development of predictive simulation models.

Allocation of the Science Budget

£ million

	1992-93	1993-94*	1994-95*
Agricultural and Food Research Council	107·3	110·1	119·9
Economic and Social Research Council	45·1	53·9	58·3
Medical Research Council	227·6	256·8	275·2
Natural Environment Research Council	129·7	141·0	148·6
Science and Engineering Research Council	520·8	587·0	621·7
Other bodies	19·5	20·3	21·2
Unallocated	–	12·0	25·4
	1,050·0	1,181·1	1,270·3

*Figures are provisional.

An extra £40 million is to be allocated to the Science and Engineering Research Council by 1994-95 to boost its programme of research grants to higher education institutions.

Innovation in Industry

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Mr Peter Lilley, has appointed five leading businessmen to the Innovation Unit of the Department of Trade and Industry. The Unit was set up in October 1991 to stimulate the commercial exploitation of Britain's science and technology base; to improve the management of innovation in business; and to raise the status of innovation.

Using their 'hands-on' experience of innovation in manufacturing industry and financial services, the five businessmen are to deal directly with firms, higher education institutions, schools and local media. They will also examine the availability of venture capital; non-financial performance measures for companies; early training in the management of innovation; and science and technology materials to support the National School Curriculum (see pp 40-4, 1991).

Environmental, Social and Cultural Affairs

Teacher Training

The need for more school-based teacher training was emphasised by the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mr Kenneth Clarke, in a speech to the North of England Education Conference at Southport on 4 January.

Under the present system in England and Wales, there are two types of initial teacher training. Graduate students take a one-year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course lasting a minimum of 36 weeks; this is the main route for entry to teaching in secondary schools for pupils aged 11 to 16. Undergraduate students take a four-year course leading to a Bachelor of Education Degree (BEd), which is the means by which most primary school teachers are trained. The Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) makes recommendations about the suitability of courses to the Secretary of State.

Mr Clarke's Speech

Mr Clarke said that teacher training needed to be based on a more equal partnership between school teachers and tutors in institutions, with schools playing a much bigger part. The newly qualified teacher 'should have had the thorough, practical experience that can only come from school based work under the supervision of serving teachers'. Although all trainee teachers already spent a substantial amount of time in school, the value of this part of training was limited if the schools themselves and their teachers did not have a clear role in training. First-class teachers in the schools should be given an opportunity to contribute more to the training of the profession's next generation.

Secondary School Teaching

The Government, Mr Clarke went on, proposed to begin by putting forward proposals for the PGCE. The minimum amount of school experience required in the secondary PGCE course stood at 15 weeks out of 36 and this was too small a proportion. In future, four-fifths of the course should normally be school based, and the Government was looking to CATE to provide clear guidance on what counted as school-based work.

Even more important, Mr Clarke continued, the schools and teachers involved in school-based training had to be given real responsibility for students' training programmes and their assessment. The training which was relevant in schools had to be carefully interwoven with college-based work.

Partner schools and teachers had to be carefully chosen to ensure that they were able to give effective practical training. Performance indicators, such as academic results, staying-on rates, truancy rates and the destination of pupils in post-school education and in employment, would be used for the choice of partner schools. 'The training of new teachers must be provided by the best schools from within the maintained and the independent sectors and by schools serving different types of area and community.'

Commenting on the accreditation of training courses, Mr Clarke said that he proposed to make it simpler and more related to the outcome of training than to the process and content of courses. In future, institutions would be required to submit school-based training plans to CATE, which would take

into account the evidence of regular school inspections by the schools inspectorate. Concrete evidence about the effectiveness of school-based courses and their quality would be sought. The criteria for accreditation would be geared more specifically to the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by the newly qualified teacher.

Mr Clarke said that teacher-training courses should also be inspected on a regular basis; this would cover training based in colleges and schools. A substantial number of Her Majesty's Inspectors would work full-time on teacher training and would support the work of CATE and monitor the quality of the new school-based courses as they developed.

Primary School Teacher Training

On primary schools, Mr Clarke concluded that it was too soon to introduce school-based training across the board. The Government wanted to see how these schools could best deliver the National Curriculum before considering new arrangements for training teachers in primary school classrooms.

Sport and Recreation

The Government's policies and priorities for sport and recreation were outlined on 19 December 1991 by the Minister for Sport, Mr Robert Atkins.

Announcing the publication of the sports policy statement *Sport and Active Recreation*,[1] Mr Atkins said that, following wide-ranging consultation involving sporting bodies and local authorities, the Government was clearly setting out its objectives for sport. These included decisions to develop sport at the 'grass roots' level by encouraging business sponsorship and increasing government funding, and to establish a more effective structure for sport in Britain.

Mr Atkins also announced the Government's response to a recent report on sport in schools made by the House of Commons Education, Science and Arts Committee (ESAC).

[1] Available free from DES Publications Centre, Canons Park, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1AZ.

Business Sponsorship

The sports policy statement notes that the private sector's investment in sports sponsorship is substantial, totalling over £200 million a year and involving over 2000 British companies. Investment ranges from support for Britain's efforts in the Olympic Games to funding for sport at the local level. However, the statement highlights the Government's belief that the potential for sponsorship needs to be more fully realised.

The Government therefore proposed, said Mr Atkins, 'to establish a business sponsorship incentive scheme for sport similar to that run for the arts and targeted at the grass roots level'. Under the scheme, companies are to be encouraged to enter into sports sponsorship for the first time in areas such as inner city sport and sport for young people, with the assurance that their investment will be matched by government funding. Initial government funding for 1992-93 will be in excess of £3 million and will cover England, Scotland and Wales.

Sports Bodies

Mr Atkins said that the statement 'reaffirms our belief that sport should be free from government intervention'. However, it supported the principle of channelling assistance for sport through independent but accountable bodies.

In order to improve the present structure, dating from 1972, two new bodies would be created to replace the Sports Council for Great Britain (usually referred to as the Sports Council). These would be a Sports Commission for the whole of Britain and a Sports Council for England.

Sports Commission

The main functions of the Commission, says the policy statement, would include:

– long-term strategic planning on matters affecting the whole of Britain;

– co-ordination of efforts to promote participation in sport;

– development and co-ordination of initiatives to promote higher standards of performance and excellence in sport at national level;

– collaboration with foreign and international bodies to further British sport and active recreation interests abroad; and

– administration of grants or loans to implement these objectives.

The Commission would be funded centrally by the Department of Education and Science and would be independent of the home country Sports Councils.

Sports Council for England

The Sports Council for England would have similar responsibilities to those of the Sports Councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its main functions would be to:

– promote participation and the development of sports foundation skills;

– promote higher standards of performance and excellence;

– foster and support the provision of sports facilities;

– promote active recreation; and

– provide grant aid to implement these objectives.

The Council, funded by the Department of Education and Science, would include the chairmen of the Regional Councils for Sport and Recreation[1] and other ministerial nominees.

Sport in Schools

The Sports Minister noted that the policy statement and the government response to the ESAC report outlined 'a number of ways for improving opportunities for young people to take part in sport, particularly by promoting partnerships between schools and other organisations in the local community'. Later in 1992 the Government would publish guidance on promoting such partnerships. Guidance would also be issued to schools on the information that should be made available to parents about each school's sports facilities and sporting achievements.

Local government authority associations are being consulted on proposals regarding the disposal of school playing fields. The Government is proposing to ask local education authorities not to dispose of school playing fields until they are satisfied that they will not be needed in the long term for school or community use.

Summary of Recent Measures

The conclusions of the policy statement complement a number of existing measures. These include decisions to:

– make physical education a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum until the age of 16;

– require all schoolchildren to be taught to swim by the time they leave primary school;

– institute a Champion Coaching pilot scheme for the extra-curricular coaching of schoolchildren;

– support legislation which will allow school governors to enter into dual-use agreements for the joint management of school premises out of school hours;

– provide financial resources to promote the greater intregration of disabled sport and able-bodied sport;

– facilitate the establishment of the Foundation for Sport and the Arts (see p 326, 1991) and the work of the Football Trust by recent reductions in Pool Betting Duty (together, these two bodies will be contributing over £70 million a year to the development of sports and sports facilities);

– create a new criminal offence of providing anabolic steroids to minors, and commission further research to ascertain the extent of the steroid problem;

– encourage sporting contact with South Africa on a sport-by-sport basis for racially integrated sports in that country; and

– provide up to £2 million for feasibility studies which will assist the Government in reaching a decision on whether to offer support to the consortium that is hoping to bring the Olympic Games to Manchester in the year 2000.

In addition, diplomatic and promotional support will be given to the Football Association's bid to host the 1996 European Football Championships.

[1] The Regional Councils promote participation in sport and recreation and bring together voluntary sports bodies, local authorities and schools to make better use of existing facilities.

Shorter Notes

EQUALISING THE STATE PENSION AGE

The Government has published a discussion paper[1] on equalising the state pension age for men and women. At present a state retirement pension is payable to women at the age of 60 and men at 65. The paper invites comments and proposals on two main questions:

1 Is a common pension age to be preferred and if so, which age should be adopted and over what period should the change be implemented?

2 If a flexible pension age is preferred, which model should be adopted as the basis for preparing a detailed scheme?

Any consideration of changes to the state pension age must take account of a number of social and economic factors, such as:

– trends in pensioners' incomes, including the role that the state pension plays;

– demographic factors, including the number of pensioners and the size of the workforce in the future;

– life expectancy; and

– spending on state retirement pension in the future and what the current system is projected to cost both in absolute terms and as a percentage of Britain's gross domestic product.

The Government regards this as a complex issue requiring detailed planning and considers that no decisions should be reached without wide public discussion.

Source: Department of Social Security news release, 18.12.91.

[1] *Options for Equality in State Pension Age.* HMSO, £9·80. ISBN 0 10 117232 X.

SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

A government code of practice on smoking in public places[1] was launched on 11 December 1991 by the Minister of State for the Environment and Countryside, Mr David Trippier. The undertaking to publish guidance on smoking was given in the White Paper *This Common Inheritance* (see pp 358-61, 1990). Mr Trippier said that 'the Government is committed to creating a smoke-free environment, with facilities where appropriate for those who wish to smoke, by encouraging suitable smoking policies in public places'. He added that 'passive smoking can be hazardous to health, and pervades hair and clothing'.

The code of practice will be distributed to those responsible for managing buildings used by the public, including restaurants, shops, hotels and waiting rooms. The Department of the Environment will monitor the success of the project through a survey of smoking policy in public places, which will be conducted by a market research company in 1992.

Source: Department of the Environment news release, 11.12.91.

[1] Available from the Department of the Environment, P.O. Box 135, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD9 4HU.

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Further Information Points

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 3 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HH.

Central Office of Information, Hercules Road, London SE1 7DU.

Central Statistical Office, Government Offices, Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ.

HM Customs and Excise, New King's Beam House, 22 Upper Ground, London SE1 9PJ.

Ministry of Defence, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB.

Department of Education and Science, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Department of Employment, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NF.

Department of Energy, 1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE.

Department of the Environment, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH.

Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS.

Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

Board of Inland Revenue, Somerset House, London WC2R 1LB.

Office of the Minister for the Civil Service, Government Offices, Horse Guards Road, London SW1P 3AL.

Northern Ireland Information Service, Stormont Castle, Belfast BT4 3ST.

Overseas Development Administration, 94 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5JL.

Scottish Information Office, New St Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3TD.

Department of Social Security, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS.

Department of Trade and Industry, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6RB.

Department of Transport, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

HM Treasury, Parliament Street, London SW1P 3AG.

Welsh Office, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NQ.

Published by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.
Text by Reference Services, Central Office of Information.

Printed in the UK for HMSO. Dd 8932413 RT J0373 January 1992 91/PU 721

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ISSN 0039-6214

ISBN 0-11-729376-8

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Printed in the United Kingdom for HMSO
Dd 8932413, C7, 1/92, GP 3385/2, CCN 16268